F5073.8
H6

/3

LUNDY'S LANE

HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

ADDRESS

BY

REV. CANON HOUSTON

JULY 25TH, 1893.

LUNDY'S LANE.

Re-Interment at the Anniversary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane, July 25th, 1893.

ADDRESS BY REV. CANON HOUSTON, M. A.

It will be in the memory of many present that on the 3rd Sept., 1891, the remains of eleven soldiers of the 89th and 103rd regiments were discovered in enlarging the sand pit beyond the Lane almost opposite to the place where we now stand; and that on the 17th of October following, those remains were deposited in this cemetery with impressive and imposing ceremony. On that occasion the president of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society, in his address, remarked that probably that was not the last occasion on which the same solemn rites would need to be performed over the remains of those who fought and fell here; and in this opinion we find he was not mistaken. On the 22nd April, when an excavation was being made on the property of Mrs. Lowell, a little north of the place of the former discovery, other human remains were unearthed which have been kept with reverend care by the local members of the Historical Society for re-interment on this, the 79th anniversary of the battle in which they fell whilst fighting in defence of their country.

We learn from tokens accompanying these remains that they represent soldiers of the 1st or Royal Scots. Of this regiment as well as the 89th, Mr. Cruikshank in his graphic description, says that it bore the brunt of the battle. To it Lieut. Hemphill belonged, whose monument near at hand marks his resting place. To this regiment belonged Lieuts. Clyne and Lamont, who were taken prisoners We know not how many privates of this regiment fell, but the part which they took in the battle and these poor remains speak and declare that they must have suffered severely. All honor to these brave men. To them and to such as they were we owe it that we belong to the British Empire and that the Union Jack still waves over us. We recommit what remains of their corruptible bodies to the earth, with religious rites appropriate to the burial of the dead, and the honor and respect due to those who represented the spirit of patriotism, which we ought all to exemplify in ourselves and cultivate in the rising generation that the sons, grandsons, and great grandsons may be worthy of their sires, and all future generations in this land may admire and emulate those who fought and fell that the invader might be driven back, and Canada preserved to the British Empire. I shall give two reasons why we should do as we are doing to-day in re-interring these remains.

We are christians, we believe in the one and only true God, and in the immortality of the soul. We believe in a future state. We believe that when the life leaves the body, and the body is put into the ground and molders to dust that is not the last o man. We believe in the resurrection of the body—that Christ in rising has risen as the first begotten from the dead, as the first fruits of His redeemed people. The resurrection of Christ is a positive assurance to

us that we shall rise. Hence all those who have believed in God and in eternal life for man after death, have shown respect and reverence for the body even when dead, and have decently buried it in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life. Abraham, the father of the faithful and the friend of God, at a time when he did not own a foot of the land of Canaan, purchased the cave of Machpelah and the field adjoining, for the burial of his dead, when his wife Sarah died. Although Jacob was dwelling in Egypt at the time of his death, his body was by his dying command conveyed for hundreds of miles that it might be laid beside that of his grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac. When Joseph was dying he gave commandment concerning his bones, that when the children of Israel returned from Egypt to Canaan, they should carry his bones with them. And though the Exodus did not take place for hundreds of years afterwards the command was remembered and obeyed. How much more then should Christains after the resurrection of Christ show their faith in the general resurrection of mankind, in committing the body to the grave with all reverence and respect and with the lively hope that his body of humiliation will rise all glorious at the last day no more to see corruption. And because this is our faith we commit the bodies of our dear ones to the earth with the sacred rites of religion. It is likely that in the hurry and confusion existing on the day succeeding the battle and the haste which the great heat of that mid-smumer's time demanded, the hundreds who lay stark upon the blood-stained field were cast into the pit prepared for them without much ceremony. Surely then it is seemly in our eyes, and pleasing in the sight of God, that in this present time of peace and prosperity, we should on this anniversary of the battle do that calmly and reverently which was omitted then, though nearly eighty years have passed away.

For another reason ought we on this anniversary to do honor to these poor remains —because these are the fragments of the bodies of men, who on this day 79 years ago instinct with life came here and fought and died in behalf of their country. We would like to know to whom these bones belong. With regard to each we would, if we could receive an answer to such questions as these :—Had he a father? Had he a mother? Had he a sister ? Had he a brother ? When he fell here did he leave behind him a sorrowing widow and fatherless children ? What was his name ? Does the name he bore connect him with any of the families now resident in this district, or any more remote part of Canada ? Or was he reared in the mother land, and in obedience to command crossed the sea to fight and die here and fill an unknown grave ?

We cannot tell. These things will never be known until the day when all secrets shall be revealed. But though we know not who these men were nor anything of their history, this we do know that in obedience to orders they fought here during the closing hours of that long, hot summer day and far into the night, or until death overtook them, whilst the moon looked down upon them from the sky above. That they thought not of surrender nor flight, but only resolved to conquer or die like true British soldiers. Let us then, though late, freely give them the honor that is due to them, and thus express our admiration for a patroitism which refused to change its allegiance and which made our fathers of that day proud of being the subjects of a kingdom which had lasted for so many ages, which has so many noble deeds emblazoned on its escutcheon, which has expanded into the mightiest empire which the world has ever seen and which is ever more and more influencing the destinies of mankind.